promotional benefits have not been extended by ONGC Ltd. to its employees in N.E. Region. The writ petition filed by Shri C.R. Gogoi & 16 others vs. ONGC (CR No. 1198-93) is under appeal before the Division Bench of High Court of Guwahati and the final decision in this regard is awaited.

Diversification by Oil Companies

1187. SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal for diversification by oil Companies in such fields as power generation, Petro-Chemicals and export, before the proposed deregulation of oil sector, which would enable multinationals to operate in India; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BALLU): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

LPG Distribution in Masi, Almora

1188. SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received some representations from Public at large and some Members of Parliament for opening an extension point for distribution of LPG at Masi in District Almora, Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details therof;

(c) the impediments for opening the said extension point which would cater to a large number of residents of nearby densely populated villages; and

(d) by when the said extension point is expected to be opened?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) M/s Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam have requested IOC for opening of extension point at Masi,

(c) and (d) Government have recently taken a decision to permit extension point in hilly areas beyond 15 KMs but not beyond 50 KMs from the main distributor point. Since Masi is located beyond 50 KMs from the nearest distributor M/s Ranikhet Gas Service, it is not covered under the policy. M/s Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam has not therefore taken up the case of Masi in their subsequent proposals submitted by them to Indian Oil Corporation Limited.

Deduction of FPF Amount

1189. SHRI SUDHIR RANJAN MAJUMDAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Oil Corporation Limited already deducted FPF amount from the pay of employees w.e.f. 16th November, 1995 to till date;

(b) whether Petroleum Ministry feels that Indian Oil Corporation's actions for deduction of FPF amount w.e.f. 16th November, 1995 onwards is legal according to Act No. 25. of 1996;

(c) whether the said deductions of FPF amount w.e.f 16th November, 1995 till date have been refunded to each employees in cash alongwith the cumulative interest;

(d) if so, when it was paid and the reasons for delay in refund to the employees; and

(e) whether Ministry will taken any legal action or action against Indian Oil Corporation Limited;

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. has reported that no amount has been deducted by them from pay of their employees specifically towards FPF with effect from 16th November 1995 till date. However, in Marketing Division amount is being

shown in the pay slip of their employees against FPF to identify the membership of FPF scheme, 1971.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

तेल अन्वेषण हेतु निजी उद्यमी

1190. **श्री चीमनभाई हरिभाई शुक्ल**: क्या पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या गत तीन वर्षों के दौरान देश में तल अन्वेषण के लिए निजि उद्यमियों को बोली लगाने के लिए कितनी बार आमंत्रित किया गया,

(ख) प्रत्येक चक्र तथा ब्लॉक में लगाई गई बोलियों और इस संबंध में सरकार द्वारा स्वीकार की गई बोलियों का ब्यौरा क्या है,

(ग) इस प्रकार स्वीकृत बोलियों के आधार पर किये जा रहे अन्वेषण का ब्यौरा तथा उससे प्राप्त होने वाले कच्चे तेल के उत्पादन के अद्यतन ब्यौरा क्या है,

(घ) मध्य प्रदेश, उड़ीसा तथा गुजरात में निजी उद्यमियों द्वारा स्थापित की जाने वाली तेल अन्वेषण परियोजनाओं का ब्यौरा क्या है, और

(ङ) आर. श्रेणी के अंतर्गत लगाई गई बोलियों में स्वीकृत निजी उद्यमियों का विस्तृत ब्यौरा क्या है?

पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री टी. आर. बालू): (क) भारत सरकार ने नवम्बर, 1994 से नवम्बर, 1997 की अवधि के दौरान तेल और गैस के अन्वेषण के लिए दो बार बोलियां आमंत्रित की थीं।

(ख) इन दो दौरों के अंतर्गत बोली के लिए क्रमश: 34 और 28 ब्लॉक प्रस्तावित किये गये और भारत सरकार ने क्रमश: सात और पांच ब्लॉक प्रदान करने का अनुमोदन कर दिया है।

(ग) और (घ) इन ब्लॉकों के लिए सुविधाओं पर हस्ताक्षर अभी किये जाने हैं।

(ङ) भारत सरकार ने तथा कथित और श्रेणी के अंतर्गत कोई बोली आमंत्रित नहीं की है।

Import of Bitumen and Furnace Oil

1191. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the present level of import of bitumen and furnace oil, separately;

(b) the expected level of import of bitumen and furnace oil in the next three years;

(c) the impact on prices of items in oil sector decanalised earlier and whether it was favourable to the country; and

(d) the likely effect on prices of bitumen and furnace oil after decanalisation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T. R. BALLU): (a) The import of Bitumen & Furnace Oil during 1996-97 & 1997-98 (Apr.—Oct.) is as under:—

Year	*Bitumen*		*Furnace*	*Oil* Value	*Qty. MMT Value in* (Rs.)
	'Qty'	Value	'Qty'		
1996-97	Nil	Nil	0.694	277.38	
1997-98	Nil	Nil	0.141	55.31	

(b) The quantum of import and export of bitumen and furnace oil in this period would depend upon the demand and supply consideration etc.

(c) and (d) The Government have decided to dismantle Administered Pricing Mechanism in the petroleum sector in phases. The Government have also decided that import-export of all petroleum products except crude (slop crude and crude condensate), NGL, ATF, MS and HSD will be decanalised from 1998-99 onwards. Naphtha, FO, LSHS, Bitumen. Paraffin Wax would be decontrolled from 1998-99 onwards.